

# Every Child Learning Every Day



March 2006

An early childhood newsletter from the State Department of Education — [www.sde.state.id.us/dept](http://www.sde.state.id.us/dept)

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## READY TO LEARN

### Books explore world, friends

By Dr. Stan Steiner

"Friendships, exploring your world and imaginative play ring true for every child. Here are some books to talk about.

"Best Best Friends," by Margaret Chodos-Irvine, 2006, Harcourt. Caldecott-winning illustrator and writer captures the innocence of childhood friendship. Mary and Clare are best friends, most of the time, as is beautifully portrayed in this story.

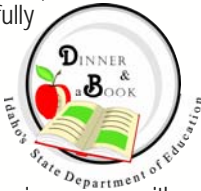
"Bebé Goes Shopping," by Susan Middleton Elya, 2006, Harcourt. Babies shopping with moms is always fun. There is so much to see and touch for baby. In this bilingual supermercado outing, readers and babies learn some Spanish in a natural context.

"Fancy Nancy," by Jane O'Connor, 2006, HarperCollins. If you want to look and feel chic you might consider some tips from Nancy. While reading about Nancy you can expect to learn some fancy new words, how to dress with style, and tips on eating with class. A truly delightful read!

"Superhero ABC," Bob McLeod, 2006, HarperCollins. Comic book characters captivate a wide age range of readers. McLeod brings some superhero expertise to this alphabet book that is sure to inspire some budding artists.

"Hush, Little Baby," Brian Pinkney, 2006, Greenwillow. Award-winning Brian Pinkney beautifully illustrates a favorite American lullaby. A perfect book-and-song combination to read and sing to little ones at bedtime.

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## Celebrating 20 years of advocacy for young children

Dear Reader:

Most folks who work with young children or are concerned about services available for the state's youngest citizens, know that Idaho addresses early education in a fragmented way.

Several federal, state, and local agencies play different roles in early childhood education and services. While these government groups work to coordinate efforts as best they can, no one public agency is charged with leadership in this critical area.

Idaho's youngest children, however, have not been without advocates.

We have been fortunate for two decades to have a group — the Idaho Association for the Education of Young Children — bringing forward the needs of young children and their parents and for



Dr. Marilyn Howard  
Superintendent of Public  
Instruction

those individual and groups who provide care and education services.

IAEYC embraced early

the idea of standards for early childhood services and professional development for those who work with this age group.

They also work to promote early childhood services as a profession to be valued and respected.

We recently began partnering with IAEYC to contribute articles for this newsletter, and for this issue we've asked them to tell you a little about their work.

In February, the IAEYC celebrated its 20th anniversary and I was pleased to join in the celebration to show my appreciation of their hard work on behalf of the children of Idaho.

I wish them success in their next 20 years.

## PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

### Delivering 'eggs' gets little bunnies busy on the trail

Physical Education (P.E.) Central is a website

([www.pecentral.org](http://www.pecentral.org)) where educators and others share lesson plans for activities aimed at different age groups.

Below is a preschool activity from that site.

#### Activity

The Bunny Trail

#### Purpose of activity

For children to practice walking, skipping, jumping, hopping, etc., while carrying an object.

#### Materials

Plastic Easter eggs (three per child) and a large basket. A low balance beam or taped line, hoops, mats, and polypots are good to start with. This activity can be customized according to the equipment you have avail-

able.

#### Description

Start out with the children on an "island." This can be a mat, carpet, or taped off area. Each child receives an egg and is told that the Easter Bunny needs help delivering them to the island across the gym, also made from a mat, carpet, or taped off area. Tell the children that they must follow the Bunny Trail to deliver the egg.

The Bunny Trail is an obstacle course that may contain as many or as few stations as you feel your children can handle.

You may want to include some of the following: hopping through a line of hoops, jumping over a river made from taped lines, walking across a balance beam, and/or following different shaped pathways made

from cutout footprints taped to the floor.

Ask the children to perform certain parts of the course while skipping, crawling, tip-toeing, and/or going backwards.

The path should end at the island at the other end of the gym where the egg is put in the basket. Have the children repeat this with the remaining eggs.

#### Variations

Vary this activity by painting the numbers one, two, and three on the eggs. Have three baskets, each labeled with a number for the matching egg to go into. If you prefer, use shapes or colors instead of numbers.



## PARENT TIPS

### Early childhood group marks anniversary

The Idaho Association for the Education of Young Children (IAEYC) will celebrate a special anniversary this year.

IAEYC's mission for the past 20 years has been to improve the quality of life for the state's young children and their families by:

- improving professional practice in early care and education
- building public understanding and support and
- maintaining a strong, diverse and inclusive organization.

Idaho AEYC, the state affiliate to NAEYC, includes five local affiliates in north Idaho, Palouse Area, Treasure Valley, Snake River and Eastern Idaho. Two affiliates include student chapters for early childhood degree seeking students at the local university. Each member (550 across the state) participates at all three levels with one membership fee.

Thanks to IAEYC's leadership, nearly 930 early childhood providers and teachers have received scholarships for training, mentoring, and college courses totaling \$1.4 million. These teachers are increasing their skills in the early childhood classroom and directly impact over 11,000 Idaho children. In addition, skills learned today will impact children yet to be cared for by those same providers and teachers.

Other activities the group supports include:

A voluntary national accreditation system that helps improve early childhood programs and recognizes high quality programs so parents can make informed choices;

Position statements on issues such as teaching reading and writing, licensing to ensure health and safety, and supporting families;

Promotion of early childhood educators as professionals to be valued and respected;

Promotion of high professional standards, comprehensive training opportunities and equitable compensation to retain qualified educators

Insurance plans for personal and professional needs

Promotion of public support and policies for young children

Building understanding and support for high quality early childhood education among policy makers and the public with Week of the Young Child, April 2-8.

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Website: [www.idahoaeYC.org](http://www.idahoaeYC.org)

## NUTRITION

### Packing lunch for field trips? Here some ideas

Young children love to go on field trips. Packing a lunch to take along on a field trip is a good idea, but sometimes you might wonder what to pack in a lunch for your young child that will stay safe until he or she is going to eat it.

There are many different fun things that children can take along on the field trip.

When choosing a bag or sack to pack a lunch in, try to use a bag or cooler that will keep the food cold.

Helping your young child pack a lunch for a field trip can be a fun activity for both of you.

Sandwiches are a good main dish in a take-a-long lunch. Peanut butter and jelly or honey is a good sandwich to take on a field trip or a trip to the park because they don't need refrigeration.

If a turkey or ham sandwich is packed, be sure to use a cooler or bag that will keep the sandwich cold.

Fresh fruits and vegetables, like an apple, carrots, orange slices, and celery can also be packed for lunch. Trail mix, granola bars, and jerky are other yummy things that add variety to a cold lunch.

A fun way to keep a bag cold is to use frozen things. The night before the field trip, you can put a drink, yogurt, fruit juice, or water in the freezer in a container that freezes well. The food item will be frozen in the morning to put in the lunch bag. While your child is traveling or playing on the field trip, the drink or yogurt will keep the food cold and probably melt enough so that your child can enjoy a nice cool beverage with his or her lunch.

Be creative and have fun as you help your young child pack his or her field trip lunch, but always remember to keep cold things cold until eaten.

## SMART STARTS

### Block play is fun, educational for kids, parents

Stacking, building, and knocking down blocks may seem like merely an engaging pastime for young children, but did you know that it also helps build math, science, social and other skills? Encouraging block play is fun and educational for children and their parents.

#### Birth to 1 year

Babies will explore blocks with their mouths, so make sure they have access to soft blocks that don't pose a choking or throwing hazard. Parents can hold babies and let them watch older children or siblings playing with blocks and describe the action to the child.

#### 1 to 3 years olds

Large blocks work well for toddlers.

Children should be free to carry and drop their blocks on the floor or into containers. Parents can sit down with their child and build (and knock down) simple stacks and lines with their child. Describe or ask your child to describe what you are building and the shapes and colors of the blocks.

#### 3 to 5 years old

Unit blocks, blocks of different sizes that when combined will create whole blocks, makes teaching early math skills easier for young children because they can see, touch and explore two parts that make a whole or four parts or six parts, etc. Blocks can be used to help children begin to understand measurement. Parents and children can use blocks to measure the height or length of stuffed

animals or other toys.

#### Skills needed for kindergarten

Block play can help support learning of a variety of knowledge including basic shapes, size, colors, and counting.

#### Other resources

"Building Structures with Young Children," by Ingrid Chalufour and Karen Worth and "Changes, Changes," by Pat Hutchins (Illustrator).

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Smart Starts is a column of everyday activities to help parents and early childhood caregivers build school readiness skills in young children. It appears weekly in the Idaho Statesman.

## ART

### Celebrate music month with veggie Instruments

Making primitive instruments from fresh vegetables (and some fruits) promotes creative thinking and problem solving, hand-eye coordination, a variety of associations about color and shapes, and is a fun activity for parents to do with young children. March is 'Music in Our Schools' month according to the National Association for Music Education. A creative twist to making music by conventional means is by using a variety of fresh vegetables to create strange instruments that make musical sounds.

#### Process

Find an assortment of fresh and firm vegetables.

Experiment with a variety of shaped and colored vegetables to find 'ones that work well when attached.

Hollow cucumbers, eggplant, bell pepper, potatoes, squash, or other veggies that will hold a firm shape.

Some vegetables might make better sounds when hit together (two halves of a cantaloupe), or hollowed and filled with beans or small stones.

Cut holes in the hollowed areas to create flute-like noises when blown.

Attach vegetable or fruit handles, or make faces using raisins, cherries, grapes, and carrots.

Children can think of funny names for their instruments like, 'tootie-fruity', 'cuke-flute', or 'French-corn'.

The 'Vienna Vegetable Orchestra' was founded in 1998. Artists create vegetable instruments, create or select the compositions to be played, and make the music come alive with their vegetable instruments. And like them, the finale could be the creation of a large pot of vegetable soup for dinner from all the leftovers. It might just be a way to get that little preschooler to eat his vegetables.

The old saying of 'don't play with your food' just doesn't hold true with this activity!